

Spark by Magnolia.Rose

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Characters: J. Hopper, Joyce B.

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Summary: One shot. Scene continuation. A cold parking lot, a warm dance.

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*A/N: Characters are not mine, song referenced belongs to Springsteen. This popped into my head, fully formed, when I heard the song on the radio. Inspiration can be strange. *M*

Joyce handed the cigarette back to Hopper, but didn't lift her head from his chest. He was warm under her ear, solid, *alive*.

Hopper finished the last puffs, and dropped it onto the pavement. He stubbed it out with the toe of his boot, but he didn't remove his arm from around Joyce. She was warm against him, fragile, but whole.

Music blasted from the gymnasium. Their kids were in there, having a ball. At least, they hoped they were. Everyone could use a normal night after the closure of the gate. The song changed, and the first strains of the new Springsteen tune drifted towards them.

Joyce sniffled and Hopper tried to pull back, to look down into her face. Her grip on his hand was firm, pulling his arm tighter around her shoulders. She turned her face farther into his shirt. Hopper tucked the fold of his coat around her. It was cold, standing in a dark parking lot in the middle of winter, but neither of them were content to wait out the dance somewhere warmer. Their kids were inside. They would stand guard.

Hopper hummed along to the chorus. It was on the radio constantly; there was no way he couldn't know it. Like all children her age, Jane only wanted to listen to the pop stations.

You can't start a fire without a spark

This gun's for hire

Joyce smiled against Hopper's chest as his familiar baritone rumbled through her. The vibrations of his voice washed over like a calming wave.

"Hey, here's an idea," Hopper said. "Give me your hand."

"You have it," Joyce mumbled.

"No, this one," Hopper said quietly. He took her right hand in his left, and pulled her around to face him fully. He kept his left arm around her shoulders. He recognized her need to be close and he'd be lying if he said he didn't feel the same way. The Mind Flayer had rattled him more than he could admit, even to himself.

"What are you doing?" She asked, confused brown eyes staring up at him.

"Dance with me, Joyce?" He asked, his voice shy as she'd ever heard it.

She smiled, and for a moment he felt sixteen and dazzled again.

"You were a terrible dancer," she giggled.

"Still am," he shrugged. "But why should the kids have all the fun?"

"Okay. I'll dance with you."

He shuffled his feet slowly and turned them in slow circles in the parking lot. He was wildly off beat, but neither of them cared. The third time he tripped over her feet, Joyce hooked her thumb securely in his belt loop and stepped carefully onto the toes of his boots. He laughed out loud, tightened his grip and spun her around the parking lot, supporting her weight entirely.

They were both laughing when the song ended. She stepped down off his feet and resumed her position tucked into his side. Before he dropped her hand, he brought it to his lips and brushed a kiss over her knuckles.

"Thank you for the dance," he said. She pressed a hand to his cheek for just a moment, and then returned her head to his chest.

"Thank you, Hop," she said quietly. "For so many things."

Even if we're just dancing in the dark